

CHANGES IN THE INDIVIDUAL

25

from us the death agonies of Phaedra
by a vision
of sea-birds flying along the cliffs of the
Adriatic.
distract our pity for the fate of
Polixena by a
glimpse of sails rising and falling on a
white-
crested sea ! So it is with music. The
idea upon
which the sonata is constructed is the
procession
of a series of changing moods.

There is little that is enduring in the
constitu-
tion of our bodies. They are material
only in the
sense that a waterfall is material —
preserving their
form but ever changing their
substance. We are
ceaselessly absorbing substances from
outside, ceaselessly building up from them
compounds which like explosives contain
potential energy,
ceaselessly converting potential energy
into actual
energy by breaking up these
compounds into
material which is discharged as waste.
Every
movement of our bodies, every
thought that flits
through our brains, destroys
something that has
been created by our nutritive organs.
In building
up these, so to speak, explosive
compounds, life
runs counter to the course of lifeless
matter,
which generally tends towards the
degradation
of energy, the breaking up of
compounds that
contain potential energy and the
dissipation of
energy into the useless form of
diffused heat.
Life, on the other hand, constructs,
but it
constructs only in order to destroy.
It uses

matter by changing it; and the more complete
is this change—the more unstable is
the tissue of
which an organ is composed—the
greater is the
vitality it exhibits. Animals which
protect themselves by solid secretions, which have
encased themselves within shells or
carapaces, have generally forfeited some liberty of
action. Plants have lost almost all power of
movement: they